

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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S E C R E T KINSHASA 6688

NODIS CHEROKEE

FROM VANCE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: AO, CG, US

SUBJ: VANCE-MOBUTU: FIRST MEETING, JULY 19

1. UPON ARRIVAL IN KINSHASA AT 8 P.M. JULY 19 I PHONED PRESIDENT MOBUTU FROM THE RESIDENCE. HE INVITED ME TO COME TO BREAKFAST NEXT MORNING, BUT THEN PHONED BACK A FEW MINUTES LATER AND ASKED THAT I COME TO HIS RESIDENCE RIGHT AWAY. I ENDED UP STAYING FOR DINNER (FOR TWO), AND ANGOLA WAS CHIEF TOPIC OF OUR CONVERSATION.

2. WHEN I ARRIVED, HOLDEN ROBERTO AND FOUR OF HIS AIDES, ALL IN BATTLE DRESS, WERE CONCLUDING A REPORT TO MOBUTU ON MILITARY SITUATION IN ANGOLA. THEY HAD JUST RETURNED FROM "FRONT" AND WERE GOING BACK THERE THE NEXT DAY. HOLDEN GREETED ME WARMLY AND AS THEY PREPARED TO LEAVE TOOK ME ASIDE AND SAID THAT IF THE USG WAS GOING TO HELP FNLA, IT SHOULD DO SO AT ONCE. I SAID THAT WAS ONE THING I HAD COME TO TALK TO MOBUTU ABOUT.

3. AFTER THE HOLDEN GROUP LEFT, MOBUTU GAVE ME BRIEF RUNDOWN ON WHAT THEY HAD REPORTED. HOLDEN AND HIS FNLA FORCES, ON MOBUTU'S INSTRUCTIONS, HAD MOVED SOUTHWARD WITH THE INTENTION OF CAPTURING THE TOWNS OF CAXITO AND BARRO DO DANDE AND THEN MOVING ON TO LUANDA WHERE FNLA, ACCORDING TO MOBUTU, STILL HOLDS, INTER ALIA, REFINERY WITH

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POL DEPOT AND NORTHERN PORTION OF PORT WHICH CONTAINS

INDUSTRIAL AREA. MOBUTU HAD GIVEN COLUMN FIVE OF HIS OLD SMALL BELGIAN ARMORED CARS, SOME ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, SOME TOWED ARTILLERY, AND HEAVY MORTARS. HOLDEN'S MEN DID SIEZE BARRA DO DANDE BUT DID NOT TAKE CAXITO WHICH ROAD JUNCTION MOBUTU REGARDED AS THE MORE IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO OPEN MPLA ROADBLOCKS BETWEEN ROBERTO-CONTROLLED NORTHERN PART OF COUNTRY AND NORTHERN PORTION OF THE CITY OF LUANDA. INSTEAD OF USING THE HEAVY EQUIPMENT HE HAD GIVEN HOLDEN TO ATTACK CAXITO, ROBERTO SENT MOST OF THE ARTILLERY, INCLUDING ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, BY BOAT FROM DANDE TO LUANDA. MOBUTU'S RUEFUL COMMENT TO ME WAS "HOLDEN IS NOT A MILITARY LEADER". ROBERTO REPORTED SOME CUBANS AND MOZAMBIQUE SOLDIERS WERE WITH THE MPLA IN CAXITO. WHILE MOBUTU WAS DISAPPOINTED OVER HOLDEN'S FAILURE TO TAKE CAXITO, HE APPEARED OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FNLA CHANCES FOR MAINTAINING A FOOTHOLD IN LUANDA.

4. I THEN MADE MY PITCH. I TOLD MOBUTU THERE WAS STRONG INTEREST IN THE ANGOLAN SITUATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF USG AND WE WANTED TO CONSULT URGENTLY WITH HIM ON WHAT MIGHT BE DONE. I SAID WE WOULD VIEW EMERGENCE OF AN ANGOLA UNDER CONTROL OF AGOSTINHO NETO AND HIS SOVIET BACKERS REGRETTABLE. WE WERE PREPARED TO BE OF HELP TO HOLDEN AND SAVIMBI. IF MOBUTU AND HIS ANGOLAN FRIENDS CAME UP WITH AN ACCEPTABLE PLAN FOR COMBATTING NETO AND MPLA, WE WERE PREPARED TO HELP IMPORTANTLY, INITIALLY AN AMOUNT OF \$1 MILLION WAS AVAILABLE. I SAID AN ADDITIONAL \$5 MILLION WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY TO IMPLEMENT A PLAN THAT APPEARED SOUND AND MORE WAS CONCEIVABLE. I SAID AID COULD TAKE FORM OF MONEY, BUT COULD ALSO TAKE FORM OF ARMS (ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT TAKE TIME), ASSISTANCE IN DISRUPTING MPLA'S SUPPLY OF SOVIET ARMS VIA BRAZZAVILLE, ASSISTANCE IN DISORGANIZING MPLA HIGH COMMAND, HELP IN IMPROVING FNLA'S PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS, ETC. I CAUTIONED THAT ANY LEAK WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR PROPOSAL.

5. MOBUTU EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION AND INDICATED FULL UNDERSTANDING OF NEED FOR SECRECY. HE AGREED THAT HELP FOR SAVIMBI WAS IMPORTANT ALTHOUGH EMPHASIZED THAT ONLY SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING FORCE BELONGED TO HOLDEN. HE SAID MOST IMMEDIATE NEED IS FOR ARMS FOR FNLA. HE ADDED HIS OWN
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MOBILIZATION RESERVE WAS EXHAUSTED. ZAIRE HAD HELD RESERVES SUFFICIENT TO EQUIP SEVEN BELGIAN-TYPE INFANTRY BATTALIONS AND HAD GRADUALLY GIVEN SIX OF THEM TO FNLA. I SAID WE WANTED TO AVOID HAVING US ARMS TURN UP IN ANGOLA BUT THEY COULD REPLACE EUROPEAN ARMS NOW HELD BY HIM. ALSO, IF NEED BE, WE COULD SUPPLY EUROPEAN TYPG ARMS. MOBUTU EMPHASIZED NEED FOR SPEED WITH WHICH I FULLY AGREED. HE REMINDED ME THAT HE HAS TWO C-130'S UNDERGOING OVERHAUL IN US. HE

SUGGESTED THEY COULD BE FILLED WITH MUNITIONS AND FLOWN
HERE. HE ALSO REMINDED ME THAT HE HAD LONG SINCE ASKED
US FOR ADDITIONAL C-130'S. IF SOME WERE AVAILABLE, THEY
COULD BE PAINTED WITH ZAIRIAN COLORS, LOADED WITH MUNITIONS,
AND SENT ZAIRE.

6. WE AGREED TO PURSUE SUBJECT OF ANGOLA AT OUR MORNING
MEETING JULY 20 TO WHICH I WOULD BRING ALONG SOME OF MY
EXPERTS AND HE HIS.
ANDREW

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, ARMS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, LIBERATION FRONTS, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 07/20/75
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KINSHA06688
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840178-2074, N750002-0187
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750738/aaaabhun.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VANCE-MOBUTU: FIRST MEETING, JULY 19
TAGS: PREL, PFOR, AO, CG, US, (MOBUTO SESE SEKO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006